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AUTHOR McQuay, Paul L.; Watters, Edmond A.
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ABSTRACT

After defining trade advisory committees as groups of individuals who have been selected because of their special knowledge and expertise to give advice on education programs, this report identifies the functions of the advisory committee in the areas of educational objectives, instructional content, program evaluation, review of equipment and facilities, government and private funding sources, staffing, trend forecasting, and community-school relations. The next section of the report describes the structure of advisory committees designed for implementation at Williamsport Area Community College. It provides suggestions on naming the group, determining its size and membership, organizing large committees and subgroups, determining length of appointment, and chairperson selection. Further guidelines are presented for scheduling meetings, providing advance notice of meetings, insuring regular attendance, calling meetings, establishing quorum, and covering expenditures. Finally, several issues related to planning are covered. First, the importance of maintaining a cross-section of the industry in the committee is underscored, especially in terms of sex, race, age, residence, and background. Second, ways in which an institution can recognize the participation and achievements of the group are listed, and third, a number of topics for discussion are suggested. (JP)

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Advisory Councils Role, Function, Status, Responsibility and Operation

Position Paper

The Williamsport Area Community College

by

Paul L. McQuay, Ph.D., Professor

and

Edmond A. Watters, III, D.Ed., Dean

The Williamsport Area Community College
Williamsport, Pennsylvania

November 18, 1980

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THE WILLIAMSPORT AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TRADE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Introduction

This paper is developed in two sections; the first will deal with the role, function, status, and responsibility of advisory committee members, and the second section will address a structure for operation of advisory committees at The Williamsport Area Community College (hereafter WACC).

What is a Trade Advisory Committee?

A trade advisory committee (often referred to as advisory committee or an advisory council) is a group of individuals (mainly from outside the field of education) who have been selected because of their specific knowledge and expertise to give advice on education programs at WACC. The advisory committee reviews, advises, and recommends ways for the educational programs to best meet the needs of students, employees, and the community.

Members of an advisory committee serve in a voluntary, non-pay basis, sharing their expertise about specific secondary and postsecondary occupational/vocational programs or a related cluster of programs. For example, a machinist and/or toolmaker may be called upon to serve on a machining program advisory committee.

Some of the functions of an advisory committee are:

1. Educational objectives - the advisory committee will review the objectives and competencies of a program and advise the institution as to whether they are realistic and within the scope of the program.
2. Instructional content - the committee will review the content of each program and recommend its appropriateness in training individuals to enter the work force or articulate with schools of higher

learning (i.e., Are graduates of the welding program prepared to enter the world of work?; the AVTS student in electronics who wants to attend a community college after high school, will he/she receive credit at the community college?)

3. Program evaluation - the advisory committee will assist WACC in the evaluation of specific programs by reviewing each program evaluation report and answering such questions as: is equipment adequate?; is the program meeting the needs of the community?; is the program meeting the needs of the students?
4. Review of equipment and facilities - the committee will review the appropriateness of equipment and facilities in order to assess whether they are adequate to achieve the desired outcome.
5. Local, state, federal, and private grants and funding sources - the advisory committee will be called upon to lend assistance in the review, recommendation and support of various grants and other external funding from agencies, industry, and additional sources.
6. Staffing - the committee may assist in the establishment of qualifications of staff and may assist in the selection process.
7. Forecasting trends and future direction - the committee will be called upon to assist in forecasting trends and changes in various programs and to assist in helping to cite future developments.
8. Advocate/Political - the informed member should become an effective liaison between education, business, industry, health agencies, and community groups. Members may take this information back to their respective employers and into other areas of the community.

In summary, the advisory committee member is an individual from the community, that because of a certain knowledge and expertise, has been asked to serve on this committee. The member assists the school in a variety of areas which generally can be categorized as: advisory, supportive, advocative, and political.

A further breakdown of the advisory committee structure at WACC follows:

Suggested Advisory Committee Structure

Name

The name of the advisory committee shall be the name of the program or the cluster of programs it represents. As an example, a group might be called the carpentry advisory committee or it may represent a broader cluster representation, such as the building technologies advisory committee.

Organization

A. Advisory committees serve as vital resources for both our secondary and postsecondary programs.

B. The committee shall consist of a sufficient number of members to provide a cross section of business and industry in a particular labor market. Although there are no minimum numbers established for a committee, normally the most effective size is between eight and twelve members. This number depends upon the nature and scope of the program being represented.

C. In addition to the non-college advisory members, there will be college representatives on the committee, including faculty, staff, and administration.

D. Where similar secondary and postsecondary programs exist within the college, one advisory committee will serve all programs. Depending upon the specific programs, it may be necessary to have subgroups or committees. An example of this might be where a committee represents a fairly large common cluster of occupations and at the same time encompasses secondary and postsecondary programs. In this example it may be reasonable to have a fairly large (10-15 member) committee, with several subgroups.

E. Length of appointment to a committee will vary. At WACC the length of appointment will be three years, with the possibility of reappointment. For the first year of committee operation, appointments should be made for one-, two-, and three-year terms (usually determined by drawing lots). In succeeding years, members should be appointed by the college for three-year terms; thus, each year some experienced committee members will be retained to allow for continuity, and some new people and new ideas will be injected. Since this is a voluntary effort, it must be kept in mind that members of the committee are contributing a great deal of time and energy to serve in this capacity.

F. Each advisory committee will select a chairperson for the group who will conduct the meetings. College staff will be responsible for developing the material and providing the necessary support.

Meetings

A. Public Law 94-482, The Vocational Education Amendment of 1976, mandates the establishment of advisory committees. It further states, "shall meet at least twice a year" and "shall file their minutes in the administrative offices of the school." More than

two meetings may be necessary to accomplish the on-going business. Some business can be acted upon by a sub-committee of the committee. Additionally, minutes should be filed in the following offices: Division Director, Dean (SVP/DCP) and President. Each member of the committee should receive copies of the minutes.

B. Written notices of committee meetings should be mailed to all members at least 21 days prior to the meeting. An agenda should be included with this notice.

C. Prior to convocation, tentative dates for two advisory committee meetings will be established and filed with the appropriate Dean(s).

D. Meetings may be called by any person on the committee. However, they are usually called by the Chairperson, the Division Director, or the Dean. Meetings cannot be called unless first clearing this matter with one of the above.

E. Members should be selected that will attend the committee meetings and want to help and support the school.

F. The members present shall constitute a quorum.

G. Roberts Rules of Order in general should be followed.

H. Expenditures of the committee will be the responsibility of the college.

Useful Planning Points

A. Committee members should represent a community cross-section in terms of sex, race, age, geographical location, and other locally appropriate factors. A special attempt should be made to appoint women, minorities, and handicapped. A balance between "big business" and smaller industries, and different supervisory and working levels is desirable.

B. A wide range of individuals should be represented on the vocational advisory committees, including: occupational experts, parents, students, alumni, vocational instructors, counselors, Chamber of Commerce members, college administrators, and community leaders.

C. Advisory committee members contribute a great deal of time and effort in the participation of this activity. They should receive recognition for their participation and achievements. Some of the ways this can be accomplished include:

1. Informing their employers of this activity and their involvement and support.
2. Public recognition - at public meetings and school functions.
3. Keeping an up-to-date listing of all members in the college catalog. Share this with the members.
4. Record minutes to include members' significant comments along with their names.
5. Inviting members to school functions and special activities, such as Open House and workshops.
6. Providing members with materials and publications to review and specific tasks to complete.
7. Making committee feel that their suggestions are being taken seriously.
8. Providing certificates and/or plaques upon completion of member's term.

D. Inviting committee members to visit classrooms in action.

E. Agenda ideas for meetings will include:

1. Review of priorities and objectives of college as established by the General Advisory Committee.

2. Review of program and course objectives and competencies.

Topics which might be incl ded are:

1. School-wide topics or heme for the year. Examples: staff development, program o jectives, safety, course outlines, etc.
2. Review and familiariza ion of facilities and equipment, especially new and up- ated.
3. Review of grants and f ture direction.
4. State-of-the-art discu sions.
5. Review of basic occupa ional skills.
6. Review placement resul s.
7. Review attrition rates and possible methods to solve it.
8. Review admission figur s by programs.
9. Review basic competenc es.
10. Discuss job market.
11. Other topics of interes t.

Summary

WACC is committed to having ea h program or cluster of progrems represented by an advisory committee, made u p of individuals who are knowledgeable of an occupational area. Each committe e will consist of between eight and twelve individuals; the key word in the selection is cross-section. As wide a cross-section of members as possible is advisable. Secondary Vocational Programs and Degree and Certificate Pro grams should be represented by one committee. Meetings need not be formal , but must be conducted on the highest professional level. Each committee sha ll meet at least twice a year. The

The meeting should be formally scheduled at least three weeks prior and a letter announcing the meeting should be sent to each member along with an agenda. Minutes of each meeting must be taken and properly distributed. Roberts Rules of Order are the standard for these meetings.

It must be remembered that committee members are busy people, who have given of their time to assist in the educational process at our school. Select individuals that will accept this challenge and then put them to work at the task at hand and properly recognize them for their accomplishments.

EDITORIAL NOTE

One would be remiss not to indicate that there are volumes of information on establishment, structure, and functions of advisory committees. One of the best sources reviewed was the "Pennsylvania Advisory Council on Vocational Education", Suite 410, City Towers, 301 Chestnut Street, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 17701. Telephone (717) 232-7653.

This paper was designed to be brief and at the same time was to introduce advisory members to their "new" role and to develop a structure for Trade Advisory Committees at The Williamsport Area Community College.

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